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WHA/CCA FOR DAVID MCFARLAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/10/2019
TAGS: ETRD ETTC PREL CU FI
SUBJECT: CUBA: FINLAND REVIEW TITLE III OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. 08 STATE 126578
 B. 08 HELSINKI 00223

Classified By: DCM Butler for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) PolOff asked Veikko Soralahki, Counselor, Unit for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Finnish MFA on January 8 if there had been any changes in the Finnish relationship with Cuba since the EU dropped sanctions. He said that there had not.

¶2. (C) Post provides the following responses to reftel A questions:

- Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

Soralahki reiterated the Government of Finland (GoF) interest in promotion and advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba and believes that this can be done via an EU relationship with Cuba. The GoF works on promoting human rights and democracy in Cuba by supporting common EU positions and statements.

- Has the host country made public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assemblies condemning human rights abuses in Cuba; or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora.

The GoF has no Embassy in Cuba. The GoF works in concert with the EU on Cuban human rights and civil society issues.

- Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and the host country in the past six months?

An official human rights delegation from Cuba visited Finland and Norway approximately two months ago.

- Did the host country offer or deliver humanitarian or other assistance to the Cuban people in the wake of the major damage caused by Hurricanes Gustav (August 30) and Ike (September 8)?

GoF contributed to disaster relief through general Caribbean earmarks processed via multilateral organizations.

- What is the nature of investments (and names, if known) that host country businesses have in Cuba? What host country businesses participated in the Havana Trade Fair (November 3)?

Major Finnish companies such as Wartsila and Nokia have investments and sell products and services in Cuba. However, we have no information to suggest that these businesses have trafficked or that they have any intention to traffic in confiscated Cuban properties. Post was unable to determine if any businesses participated in the Havana Trade Fair.

- Are there any bilateral trade agreements or other cooperative agreements between host country and Cuba?

GoF does not have bilateral trade agreements with Cuba. GoF works through the EU delegation on trade and cooperation issues.

- Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for host country nationals to study in Cuba; Cuban-paid medical travel for host country nationals; and Cuban doctors working in host country?

Post knows of no significant government-funded exchange programs. Generally, Cubans in Finland are in Finland as a result of economic or family-based immigration and not as part of a Cuban or Finnish Government funded program.

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